

Preface

Conversion, by its very nature, has always aroused interest in many realms: the religious and the national, the historical and the social, the philosophical and the psychological. This interest has intensified in recent decades. The subject of conversion is constantly on the public agenda, in Israel and in Jewish communities throughout the world. *Conversion: Halakhah and Practice* is a comprehensive halakhic-legal study of conversion in Jewish law. It clarifies the essential nature and the fundamental halakhic principles of the legal process by which a non-Jew enters the community of Israel. The author analyzes the halakhic literature concerning conversion and related juridical realms, from the periods of the *Mishnah* and the Talmud until the present. This is the first scholarly work that examines the halakhic literature on conversion as it has evolved over the course of time.

Special attention has been given to the application of the laws of conversion in the *responsa* literature, especially from the period of the Emancipation until now. The halakhic discussion in *Conversion: Halakhah and Practice* is augmented by an examination of several relevant topics from Jewish history, as a background to the halakhic discussion and in order to clarify it.



Conversion: Halakhah and Practice is a translation of the Hebrew work published in 1994 by Bar-Ilan University Press. I am extremely grateful, first and foremost, to Professor Moshe Kaveh, the President of Bar-Ilan University, for initiating the translation of the book and for his unflagging support. I would like to offer my profound thanks to Edward Levin, the gifted translator, for faithfully rendering the difficult material of this book into English. I am thankful to Rabbi Dr. David Mescheloff, a Torah scholar,

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who spared no effort in editing the English text and who added necessary clarifications. Ms. Margalit Avisar, the director of Bar-Ilan University Press, tirelessly orchestrated the production of the English edition in a professional and dedicated manner. Ms. Anne Lamdan devoted much labor to ensure the accuracy of the final text. My thanks go to all of them.

And, finally, my unbounded gratitude goes to my beloved wife Zipora, my partner and support. My debt to you, Zipi, is one of the things “for which there is no measure.”